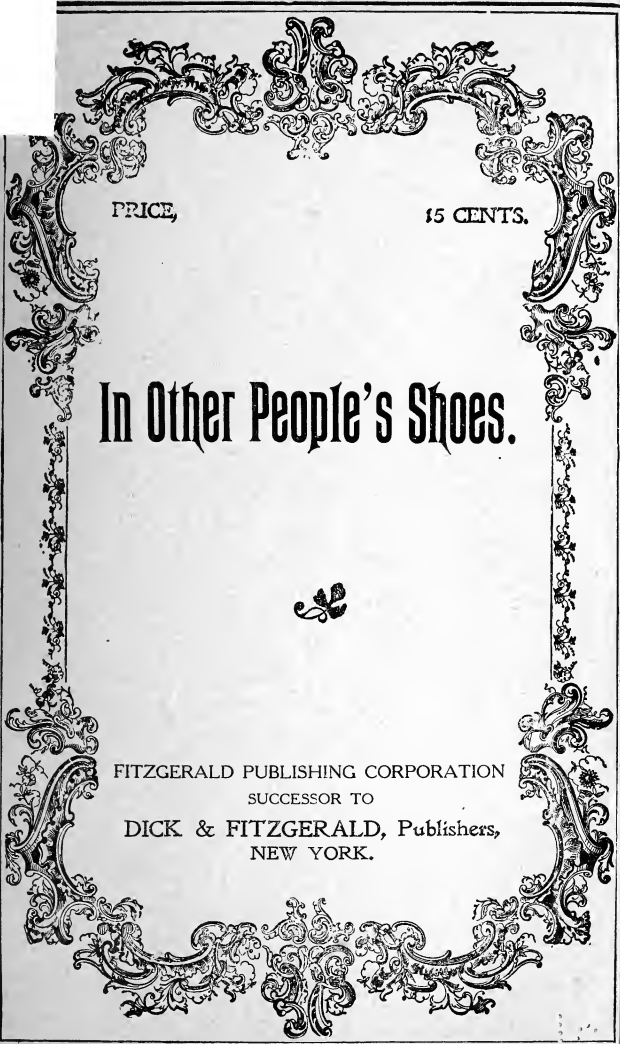


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In Other People's Shoes.



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IN OTHER PEOPLE'S SHOES

OR,

A TRANSFORMATION

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

Arranged for the American Stage

BY HAROLD SANDER

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18 Vesey Street New York City

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IN OTHER PEOPLE'S SHOES

CHARACTERS.

LUCY LINDLEY (<i>Mopsie</i>)	}	...Pupils at Miss Wright's Boarding School
MARY MURRAY (<i>Wopsie</i>)		
ALINE ATLAS (<i>Popsie</i>)		
SALLY LUNN.....		The cook
ESTHER EUBANK.....		The housemaid
POLLY POTTS.....		The kitchenmaid
MOIRA MAPPE (<i>Topsie</i>).....		A prospective pupil
MRS. MAPPE.....		Her mother

TIME.—The present. TIME OF PLAYING.—Fifty minutes.

COSTUMES.

MRS. MAPPE and MOIRA wear smart outdoor costumes. The PUPILS wear the modern school girl dresses while the COOK and MAIDS wear suitable print dresses.

INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES.

Fancy dress, boudoir cap and eye-glasses for SALLY LUNN. Bandage, fork and potato for MOPSIE. Hand-bag for MRS. MAPPE.



STAGE DIRECTIONS.

As seen by a performer on the stage, facing the audience, R. means right-hand; L., left hand; C., center of stage.

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SEP -8 1917

no. 1

IN OTHER PEOPLE'S SHOES

SCENE.—*Sitting-room of MISS WRIGHT'S Boarding School. Door at L. Window (at back) practical, if possible. Easy chair L., between door and c. Couch R. Table, on which there are books, ruler, pencils, pen, inkstand and a newspaper. Occasional chairs at suitable places about the room. DISCOVERED MOPSIE, WOPSIE and POPSIE, leaning out or looking through window, waving handkerchiefs, as in farewell.*

MOPSIE (*coming forward and speaking with mock sadness*). A whole day and a half! What shall we do without our dear Miss Wright? (*Sits*)

WOPSIE. However shall we bear it?

POPSIE. Sisters, let's mingle our tears. (*Flops down on MOPSIE'S knee and pretends to weep*)

MOPSIE (*pushing her off*). Oh, for goodness' sake, don't flop on me, you great, heavy creature. Do your weeping on a chair all to yourself, or else try Wopsie's knee.

POPSIE (*in tragic tones*). Unkind minions, I'll none of either! Seriously, though, what are we going to do? How make the most of our freedom? (*Stretching out her arms dramatically*) Freedom, glorious freedom!

MOPSIE (*rising and walking towards window*). Oh, for the magic wand of a harlequin. By the way, was it a wand? My brother used to call it a "Smacker." So, oh, for the "something" of a harlequin to transform ourselves into—into——

WOPSIE. Into what, you absurd thing?

POPSIE (*joining MOPSIE at window and looking out*). I do declare, there's cook at the gate talking to the policeman *already!*

MOPSIE (*dramatically*). Oh, happy, happy cook! Would I were a cook. Oh, I say— (*Excitedly, and coming forward*)

WOPSIE. Well, what's happened to you now? Out with it before you explode.

POPSIE. Come on, Mops, let's have the cook idea.

MOPSIE. Suppose we get into other people's shoes—a sort of transformation.

WOPSIE. A what?

POPSIE. Do you mean a pantomime?

MOPSIE. No, you geese, but something nearly as funny. Suppose for the whole of to-day we change places with the maids.

WOPSIE (*sarcastically*). What a novel idea!

POPSIE. The "Maid-of-all-work" notion is quite antique, my dear.

MOPSIE. Doubtless, my fair critics; but forget not that "there is nothing new under the sun," so all we poor mortals can do is to polish up the old.

WOPSIE. Unfold thy hated "polish."

POPSIE (*seating herself on couch and folding her arms*). I am all attention.

MOPSIE. Well, then, suppose we dress Sally, the cook, as Miss Wright, and Polly Potts, the kitchenmaid, as— as Wopsie—

WOPSIE. Easy, easy there with my person.

POPSIE. Don't interrupt, Wops. Go on, Mops.

MOPSIE. And Esther Eubank, the housemaid, as "yours truly." (*Makes a bow*) We must make them act the part and do no manner of work, that is to say, housework, and we will take their places and do all that is requisite and necessary—

WOPSIE. Do hurry up, Mopsie. You make us feel as if we were in church.

POPSIE. Oh, you "interfering parrot."

WOPSIE. Go on, finish it out.

MOPSIE (*laughing and continuing*). Oh, you snapdragons! Well, what about our parts. Let's settle that.

WOPSIE. I should muff the cooking, for a start.

POPSIE. Nonsense! Look at the lovely gingerbread you made the last time Miss Wright went away. Of course, there was too much ginger in it, and it was a bit burnt, but we ate it for all that.

MOPSIE. Suppose we draw lots for them.

WOPSIE. How?

POPSIE. That sounds fair; but how shall we manage it?

MOPSIE. I'll show you. (*Goes up to table and tears a piece of margin off the newspaper, divides it into three, writes on each, the other two watching her closely*) Now, I've written "cook" on one, "kitchenmaid" on another, and "housemaid" on a third. I'll screw them up, and you, Wopsie, must throw them on the floor, and Popsie shall have first pick. Now, won't that be fair?

WOPSIE. Couldn't be fairer. I'll scatter; screw them up, Mops. (*MOPSIE does so, and hands them to WOPSIE, who throws them on to the floor*)

POPSIE. I have first pick, you said? (*Picks one up*)

MOPSIE. Now, Wops, you next. And here's my "Hobson's choice." (*Picks the last one up*) Now, Popsie, read yours aloud.

POPSIE (*after reading*). "Housemaid," hurrah! (*Capers about*)

MOPSIE. Now, Wopsie, reveal thy fate unto us.

WOPSIE (*reads*). "Cook," of course. Just my luck!

MOPSIE. That settles me for kitchenmaid, without reading, and I simply loathe washing up. Ugh! (*Shudders*)

POPSIE. I say, this is all very well, you know, for us, but how about the maids? We seem to be taking them quite for granted.

MOPSIE. I think I can answer for cook. She's up to fun, and always wishing for "a day out o' the smell o' them stew-pans," so this will come "as a boon and a blessing." Suppose we call the maids up here.

In Other People's Shoes

WOPSIE. We can then unfold our plot and see how the land lies.

POPSIE. And I propose we each do our own squaring——

MOPSIE. "Squaring?"

POPSIE. Well, bribing, coaxing, or whatever you like to call it.

WOPSIE. You mean we each pay in some form for our own exchange?

POPSIE. That's the idea. What a magnificent brain you have, Wops. (*A knock is heard at the door*) Come in.

ENTER ESTHER EUBANK.

ESTHER. If you please, young ladies, cook wants to know if there is anything you would specially like for dinner. Miss Wright left in such a hurry that she gave no orders.

WOPSIE (*aside*). It will be "special" when I have cooked it.

MOPSIE. Never mind dinner orders for a moment, Esther. Where's the kitchenmaid?

ESTHER (*looking slightly surprised*). Polly is hanging out the tea-towels, Miss Lindley.

MOPSIE. Will you ask her to come here, Esther?

POPSIE. And come back yourself, please.

ESTHER (*still more surprised*). Y-es, Miss Atlas.

[EXIT.

WOPSIE (*laughing*). Poor Esther looks scared out of her wits. Now I'm going to interview the cook. I've got my eye on her in the garden, but I'm not going to give her away to the others. [EXIT, *laughing*.

MOPSIE. Now for blandishments, coaxing, bribing, and fun. Oh! I forgot about the washing up!

POPSIE. Thank goodness the beds are made. I've escaped that at least. (*Knock is heard at door*) Come in.

ENTER POLLY POTTS *and* ESTHER.

MOPSIE (*to* POLLY). Polly, Miss Wright has gone away until to-morrow, and—and for a bit of fun—

POPSIE (*looking at* ESTHER). Yes, for a bit of fun. You listen, too, Esther.

POLLY (*to* MOPSIE). Yes, Miss Lindley, I be listening. I likes a bit o' fun.

ESTHER (*to* POPSIE). I will say, Miss Atlas, as a bit o' fun doesn't come amiss to me, either.

MOPSIE (*to* POLLY). That's splendid! If you act your part well, I'll give you—now what shall I give you?

POLLY. I'd like that 'ere lace collar as you had on yesterday, Miss; but I can't act.

MOPSIE (*laughing*). You can act all I want, Polly.

POPSIE (*to* ESTHER). Now, Esther, I'll tell you what I want you to do. Come over here. (*Takes ESTHER to the furthest corner of the room, and they talk to each other in tones inaudible to the audience, but making quite clear by gestures that POPSIE is explaining and arranging the fun that she wishes ESTHER to join in*)

MOPSIE (*to* POLLY). I want you to be Miss Lindley, and wear my clothes for the rest of the day.

POLLY. Me! Laws-a-massy, Miss! (*Door is suddenly opened and WOPSIE rushes in, almost dragging SALLY LUNN with her*)

SALLY (*wiping her face with her apron*). Goodness gracious, Miss Murray, what a madcap you are, to be sure!

WOPSIE. It's all right. Cook's game—I mean quite agreeable! Come on, cookey dear, and dress. (*Bustles her out again, laughing as she goes*)

MOPSIE (*continuing, to* POLLY). And I want you to lend me your print dress, and cap, and apron. You are to sit in here, or stroll about the garden, in fact, be Miss Lindley, and I am going to be Polly Potts, and wash up.

POLLY. Now, what a pity, Miss, I've just done all the mornin's washin' up.

MOPSIE (*aside*). Thank goodness! (*Aloud*) Oh, have you?

POLLY. But there's taters to peel.

MOPSIE (*aside*). Oh, my poor hands! (*Aloud*) All right, Polly. (*POPSIE and ESTHER come forward*)

POPSIE. I've told Esther, and she quite likes the idea. Don't you, Esther?

ESTHER (*clapping her hands sentimentally*). Don't I just! Only fancy, bein' a lady for a whole day. I shall be able to finish that lovely book now, as I always has to hide it when I hears Miss Wright comin' upstairs.

POPSIE. Well, come on, Esther, and let's get into each other's shoes. You must lend me your prettiest cap and apron. Hurry, we're losing precious time.

[*EXEUNT POPSIE and ESTHER.*]

POLLY (*mystified*). What's it all for, Miss? I'm blest if I can make it out.

MOPSIE. Simply this, Polly, we're longing for some fun while Miss Wright's away, and we're going to have a transformation.

POLLY. "Trans-fur-mation." What's that?

MOPSIE (*aside*). Oh, gracious! (*Aloud*) It means a change, Polly, and we do so want a change.

POLLY. Oh, I see! I knows now. My last missis had a trans-fur-mation, but hers was false hair, as made old uns look like young uns.

MOPSIE (*shrieking with laughter*). Polly, you're a real treat! (*POLLY looks at MOPSIE, and not knowing what else to do, begins to laugh heartily herself. Whilst they are laughing the door opens, and WOPSIE ENTERS, dressed in cook's print dress and cap and apron. She has padded out the clothes in order to look stouter. She is followed by SALLY, who is arrayed in all MISS WRIGHT'S clothes, including smart boudoir cap and eye-glasses*)

POLLY (*at first glance takes her for MISS WRIGHT, and clutches at MOPSIE in terror, then, taking another peep, she recognises cook. All laugh together*). Well, I'm

blowed—I mean blest! Why, cook, yer looks quite the lady. Why, yer looks better lookin' than the missis herself.

SALLY (*huffily*). It don't take other folks clothes to make Sally Lunn a lady, an' cumparisons isn't perlite, let me tell yer, Polly Potts. (*Stumbles over her long dress, and eye-glasses fall off her nose*) Drat these silly specs. I carn't keep 'em on nohow.

MOPSIE. Come on, Polly, it's time to dress you. (*Aside*) Don't go and get cook mad, you silly. You'll lose that lace collar and spoil all the fun. (*Hustles POLLY out of the room and follows her*)

WOPSIE (*to SALLY, who is seated in state in MISS WRIGHT'S easy-chair*). If you please, Miss Wright, what shall I cook for dinner to-day? (*All the others laugh, aside*)

SALLY (*putting on an air*). Well, cook, there's them sausages as might do for to-day; they wants eatin' up. We'll have mashed taters with 'em, an' there's plenty o' apple sauce an' custard, tho' I likes a bit o' cheese an' a onion, instead o' sweets. (*Leans back in chair, apparently quite satisfied with her performance*)

WOPSIE (*assuming cook's style*). Very well, mum. (*Aside*) There'll be a "transformtaion" in the kitchen soon, I'm afraid. (*Laughs to herself as she EXITS*)

ENTER ESTHER and POPSIE, who have duly exchanged dresses.

POPSIE (*smoothing her apron*). Oh, I say! Don't I make a nice housemaid? What do you think, Esther—I mean, of course, Miss Atlas?

ESTHER (*simperingly*). Well, Miss Atlas—I means Esther—there be them as thinks I'm not amiss.

SALLY (*aside*). That gel's conceit sickens me.

POPSIE. I don't doubt it. All the same, it is as well that it isn't the baker's day for calling. (*ESTHER looks a bit scared and confused. POPSIE notices it and smiles*) I must say, though, you do look tip-top. (*ESTHER pats her hair and looks gratified*) Now, get your book and

recline gracefully on the couch—(*Aside*)—as I *don't* do. (*Aloud*) If you like, when you are tired of reading, you can play the piano. I think I heard you once when you thought I was not in the room.

ESTHER (*in confusion*). Oh——

SALLY (*breaking in suddenly*). Oh, for the love o' goodness, Miss, don't ask her to play the pianner while I'm here. She only knows one toon, an' she plays it every blessed time you all go out. I'm sick to death of "Swanny River," an' I sometimes wishes as she was drowned in it, that I does. (*Shakes her head so vigorously that her glasses fall off again*. ESTHER starts up angrily, flings down her book, and goes up to SALLY, but POPSIE interposes, gently pushes ESTHER back on the couch, restores her book, and shakes a warning finger at SALLY)

POPSIE. Miss Wright, I am astonished at you. (*Picks up eye-glasses and fixes them on SALLY'S nose*) Fancy speaking to Miss Atlas in that manner.

SALLY (*looks taken aback for a minute, then her good humor returning, she laughs*). Oh, lor! I forgot my act. I beg yer pardon, Miss Atlas. (*ESTHER gives a dignified bow*)

POPSIE. There, that's better.

SALLY (*suddenly straightening herself*). Well, as I am Miss Wright, I wants to know what my housemaid's a-standin' in my sittin'-room givin' me her impudence for? (*ESTHER giggles behind her book, POPSIE claps her hands delightedly*)

POPSIE. A splendid return, cook. (*Coughs and assumes a demure manner*) I beg pardon, Miss Wright. Can I do anything for you before I go and lay the cloth for dinner?

SALLY (*with dignity*). Yer can hand me that noose-paper. I haven't seen it this mornin'. (*POPSIE hands her the paper, hiding her laughter as she does so, and goes out of the room. There is silence for a second or two as SALLY unfolds the paper, but as soon as she tries to read, she makes an exclamation of vexation*)

ESTHER (*in an affected voice*). What's the matter, Miss Wright?

SALLY (*angrily pulling glasses off*). It's not Wright, it's all wrong! I can't read a line with them plaguey things. Run in the kitchen, like a good girl, an' bring my own specs off the kitchen mantel-piece.

ESTHER (*with a show of dignity*). I think you are forgetting who you are speaking to.

SALLY (*throwing down her paper in a rage*). I shall be rememberin' in another minit—

ESTHER (*scornfully*). You're no actress. You can't ever forget your kitchen ways. (SALLY is in the act of springing up to advance upon ESTHER when door opens, and MOPSIE ENTERS, dressed in POLLY'S morning dress. She is followed by POLLY, who is laughing sheepishly, as though afraid of the others seeing her)

MOPSIE (*laughing*). Come forward, Miss Lindley. There's only Miss Atlas and Miss Wright here.

SALLY (*as POLLY advances giggling*). Laws bless us! I wouldn't ha' knowed yer, Polly. (MOPSIE shakes a warning finger at SALLY) That is, where have you bin all this time, Miss Lindley?

POLLY (*grinning*). Please cook—I means Miss Wright—it took me ever so long to comb my hair to make this here plait. You knows, cook—I means Miss Wright—as I doesn't get over much time for hair-dressin'. (Goes over and sits on couch beside ESTHER, stumbling over ESTHER'S foot as she does so)

ESTHER (*angrily*). You great clumsy thing. Can't you see where you're a-puttin' your big feet?

MOPSIE (*aside*). That was "to the life!"

POLLY (*hotly*). Your feet ain't little uns, an' no lady would sit with 'er feet a-stickin' out like that.

SALLY (*with dignity*). Young ladies, I cannot allow sich carryin's on in my sittin'-room. (MOPSIE steps aside out of view to indulge in the laughter she cannot repress. POLLY laughs outright, and ESTHER giggles behind her book)

MOPSIE (*aside*). Oh, this is killing!

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SALLY (*turning to MOPSIE*). Now, Polly Potts, go an' get them taters peeled, an' mind as yer don't take too much peelin' off.

MOPSIE. Yes, ma'am. (*Aside*) I'm glad to escape. [EXIT.]

POLLY (*gazing at ESTHER and SALLY*). Oh, lor! (*Yawns*) This is a slow game, an' this here belt's too tight. I ain't used to bein' squeezed, leastways not with a leather belt. I'll let another bit out. (*Loosens belt as she is speaking*)

ESTHER. You vulgar creature.

POLLY. No vulgerer 'an you. Likewise a butcher is as good as a baker any day, so swaller that. (*To SALLY*) I say, cook—I means Miss Wright—(*Laughs*)—how do yer like bein' a lady?

SALLY. Well, Polly,—I means Miss Lindley—(*Aside*) Drat it! (*Aloud*) I must say as I prefers the kitchen, particularly as it's gettin' nigh my time for a bite.

ESTHER (*looking up from her book*). Some people can't never forget their kitchens.

POLLY (*meaningly*). Some folks likes "kitchen entrances" best, specially on baker's day.

SALLY Good lass, Polly!

ESTHER (*sarcastically*). You're lucky, cook, 'cos it's always "policemans' day." (*Door opens, and WOPSIE rushes in. Her hair is ruffled, her cap is hanging off, and she appears breathless*)

WOPSIE. Oh, cook—I mean, please, Miss Wright—I opened the larder window wide, and then went into the kitchen, and when I came back I saw "Jerry," the black terrier, disappearing round the bushes, trailing all the sausages after him. I chased him until I was quite out of breath, but I couldn't catch him.

SALLY (*starting up angrily*). What did you leave the winder open wide enough for him to get through for, you jinny-hammer, you! (*Aside*) I promised my beau a bit of cold sausage for supper.

WOPSIE (*who is about to retort, suddenly remembers*).

I'm very sorry, Miss Wright. (*Smiles aside, and SALLY collapses in chair, looking rather scared at her own outburst. POLLY puts her hand over her mouth to stifle her laughter*)

ENTER MOPSIE. *Both hands are very soiled, and she has a piece of rag tied round one of the fingers of her left hand. In her right hand she carries a fork, on which is stuck a potato, only half pared.*

MOPSIE. I simply can't go on with these potatoes, cook—(*SALLY draws herself up and glares at MOPSIE, who takes her cue*) I mean Miss Wright. I've cut my finger twice, and then I put the potato—(*Slyly*)—I mean tater, on a fork, and it's harder to pare than ever. And look at my hands! (*Wipes her hands down her white apron, and shudders*)

SALLY. Oh, this ain't no manner o' good. Stealin' sausages is *too much* like a trans-fur-mashun for my likin'! It's all very well at a panty-mime, but I'm a-sittin' here fair sick for something to eat, that's what I am! (*WOPSIE steps behind to laugh freely. POLLY in a sudden access of mirth knocks ESTHER'S book out of her hand, and rolls on the couch in a fit of laughter. All the others turn to look at her, and then laugh in sympathy*)

POLLY (*gasping out*). Peelin' taters on a fork—oh, my! (*Door is suddenly opened and POPSIE rushes in*)

POPSIE. Oh, I say! Jerry has just come through the dining-room window with something long and dirty in his mouth. He's jumped right across the table, scattering everything, and the tablecloth is not fit to be seen. (*To ESTHER*) What shall I do, or where shall I find a clean cloth?

ESTHER (*looking up from her book*). Really, Esther, I cannot inform you. (*Goes on with her reading*)

POPSIE (*staggered*). Well, of all—oh, I forgot, Miss Atlas, sorry I spoke to you. (*Laughs aside. A loud ring is heard at front door bell. All look filled with conster-*

nation, and form quite a picture in their various ways of expressing it)

WOPSIE. Gracious! Who can that be? No one was expected to-day. Something must be done quickly. Mopsie, you got us "into other people's shoes," so tell us what to do next.

MOPSIE. A true bill, Wops! Well, there's no time to change, and it may only be a parcel or something equally unimportant, so we must continue to play our respective parts with what courage we can muster. *(Another ring is heard)* Pops, pull yourself together, and go and answer the door. *(EXIT POPSIE)* Cook, put those glasses on, and keep them on. You, Wops, clear off to the kitchen, and fasten Jerry up. *(EXIT WOPSIE)* Esther, you are still Miss Atlas. Polly, for goodness sake get a book to hide that everlasting grin of yours. *(Gives POLLY a book)* Now, play up well all of you, and you will get what has been promised. Now I'm off to the kitchen, but I mustn't leave my tell-tale fork here. *(Picks up fork and potato, and in hurrying out bangs into MRS. MAPPE and MOIRA, who are just ENTERING)* I beg your pardon, ladies.

[EXIT MOPSIE, hurriedly.]

POPSIE *(who is struggling for composure as she ushers in the visitors)*. Mrs. and Miss Mappe—Miss Wright.

[EXIT POPSIE.]

MRS. MAPPE *(aside to her daughter)*. What nicely-spoken domestics. *(Aloud, as she advances)* I am afraid I am an unexpected visitor to-day, Miss Wright. You are Miss Wright, I presume? *(Looking at SALLY, who has half risen from her chair, and who looks exceedingly uncomfortable)*

SALLY. Oh, no "presumin'," I'm sure, ma'am. I didn't expect as you'd call to-day; but sit yourselves down, an' welcome. *(Waves her hand towards two chairs)*

MRS. MAPPE *(looking astonished)*. This is my daughter Moira, Miss Wright, of whom I have written. And these young ladies? *(Indicating the two on the couch, as she and MOIRA seat themselves)*

SALLY (*floundering*). Oh, these is two of my other scholars, as lives in—I means pupil ladies—Miss Atlas an'—an' Miss Lindley. (*During this conversation, MOIRA has been looking curiously at the uncomfortable trio*)

MRS. MAPPE (*looking very dubious*). I must apologise for thus coming without warning, as it were, but we are going abroad a week earlier than was expected, and I thought it would be better to come and explain, and if agreeable, and convenient, leave my daughter with you now. (*Lays hand-bag on table*)

SALLY (*making a desperate effort to appear at ease*). Certainly, ma'am, an' a good idea. (*SALLY looks so very uncomfortable that POLLY, who has kept her face hidden up to this time behind her book, gives vent to a giggle, at which ESTHER gives her an angry nudge, which POLLY, by a look, shows that she strongly resents*)

MRS. MAPPE (*aside to MOIRA*). Moira, my child, are you sure we are at the right place?

MOIRA. Quite sure, mother; but they are certainly not what we expected. (*During this aside, ESTHER goes and whispers to SALLY, who nods her head and looks relieved*)

SALLY (*rising and fixing her glasses, advances towards MRS. MAPPE*). P'raps you'd like to see the room that Miss Wright—I means that I'm havin' got ready for your daughter. Esther, I mean Miss Atlas, will show it to you. (*ESTHER comes forward and bows with quite an air*)

MRS. MAPPE (*rising and speaking aside to MOIRA*). We'll go and look, dear, but I certainly shall not leave you behind me. (*Aloud*) Thank you. Come, Moira.

[EXEUNT ESTHER, MRS. MAPPE, and MOIRA.]

SALLY (*jumping up in a rage as soon as door is closed, and throwing cap and eye-glasses on table, turns to POLLY, who is giving full vent to her laughter*). I'm not goin' to sit here an' be made a laughing-stock for nobody, leastways, not for you, Polly Potts, you great, silly-lookin' lump o' know-nothin'! I'm goin' for my

bite, an' I'm goin' to eat it in my own kitchen, an' in my own proper clothes!

POLLY. Oh, lor, cook, if yer could on'y ha' seen yer-self! (*Laughs again.* SALLY is so exasperated that she picks up a ruler and chases POLLY round the room. Door opens slightly, and MOPSIE, WOPSIE, and POPSIE peep cautiously in. Seeing that the visitors are not there, MOPSIE advances, followed by WOPSIE and POPSIE)

MOPSIE. Stop that row, will you!

WOPSIE. Put that ruler down, cook!

POPSIE. Who was it? I didn't know their names, and I simply had to show them in here. The drawing-room was locked, and the dog had made such an upset in the dining-room.

SALLY (*who looks dishevelled*). Who was it? You might well ask that. It'll be the sack for three of us, an' maybe a sudden journey for three more, when Miss Wright gets to know.

POLLY (*shaking her head*). Safe as houses, Miss. They've gone upstairs to see the room with Esther, but I think as they smells a rat.

MOPSIE. For goodness' sake, cook, who was it?

WOPSIE. Hurry up and tell us.

POPSIE. Yes, before they come downstairs.

SALLY. How yer do fluster a body! It's that young lady as is expected next week, an' her ma. They're called Map, or Tap, or somethin'.

MOPSIE. Oh, horrors!

POPSIE. I wish we could "transform" ourselves into thin air!

WOPSIE. I know Moira Mappe. Mrs. Mappe is a friend of my mother's; but, you see, I'd no idea that she was coming here. Miss Wright did not mention the name of the new boarder to us. She is always so close.

SALLY (*pointing to POLLY*). That idiot did nothin' but giggle an' laugh, Esther was as stiff as starch, an' I—(*In an access of temper*)—I never felt such a fool in all my born days. I'm goin' to where I feels *somebody*, an' that's in my kitchen!

[EXIT.]

POLLY (*contritely*). I did my best, Miss Lindley; but, oh, if you'd seen cook! (*Tries to hide a laugh as she goes out*)

POPSIE. Well, Mops, getting "into other people's shoes" is glorious.

MOPSIE. Well, whoever could have foreseen such a *contretemps* as this?

WOPSIE. Cheer up, Mops. If I could only get hold of Moira—(*Gentle knock is heard, but none has the courage to answer. Door is slowly opened*)

ENTER MOIRA. *Hesitates on seeing, as she thinks, the maids.*

MOIRA. I have come for my mother's hand-bag. She says she left it on the table there, and will you please tell Miss Wright that we shall not return. (*MOPSIE and POPSIE look at each other in dismay, and go to other end of room, but WOPSIE goes up to MOIRA and takes hold of her arm. MOIRA looks startled*)

WOPSIE. Moira.

MOIRA (*with a gasp of astonishment*). Mary! What does this mean? You are not a maid here!

WOPSIE (*smiling*). No, Moira, not that, though I confess it looks like it. Let me introduce you to my fellows in this little escapade. (*Motions to other two, who come forward*) This is Lucy Lindley, otherwise "Mopsie," Aline Atlas, otherwise "Popsie," and—(*Bowing*)—Mary Murray, otherwise "Wopsie."

MOIRA. Oh, you dears! What lovely nicknames! Do go on.

WOPSIE. Miss Wright has gone on a visit to a sick friend, and she is staying until to-morrow, so Mopsie there thought it would be lovely to get "into other people's shoes," so we coaxed and bribed the maids into changing places with us, and now, behold!

MOIRA (*impulsively*). Oh, you dear wicked creatures! How I should have enjoyed the fun if I had only known. Mother is furious, and thinks we have been tricked.

POPSIE. Where is your mother?

MOIRA. Outside, in the cab, waiting for this. (*Holds up hand-bag*)

MOPSIE. This means expulsion for us.

WOPSIE. I am afraid so, Moira, and, as cook puts it, "sack" for the others.

MOIRA (*emphatically*). Never! I'll tell mother all about it, and coax her to be "mum" to Miss Wright.

WOPSIE (*flinging her arms round MOIRA*). Oh, you darling! You real brick! (*POPSIE and MOPSIE join hands and joyfully caper round and round*)

MOIRA. Nonsense! I'm only selfish. Do you think I would miss coming here, after seeing you all? Not likely! I here and now declare myself to be "Topsie," and gladly make one of a wicked four, and you must let me take an equal share in the next escapade. Let's join hands and have a round on the strength of it. (*They all join hands, and are careering round, when door is opened, and MRS. MAPPE looks in. She looks aghast at the sight of her daughter having a "ring" with the maids, as she thinks*)

ENTER MRS. MAPPE.

MRS. MAPPE (*advancing*). What is this? A lunatic asylum, and has my daughter gone mad, too? (*MOPSIE, WOPSIE, and POPSIE all go up stage together, but MOIRA takes her mother by the arm and looks coaxingly at her*)

MOIRA. Mother, darling, it's only a bit of fun, after all.

MRS. MAPPE (*shaking MOIRA off*). I see nothing but madness in this place. Come away at once, Moira. No, I won't listen to you!

MOIRA (*touching her mother's cheek*). Yes, you will, mother o' mine. You know what you've told me about your own schooldays? (*MRS. MAPPE'S face softens*) The real Miss Wright is away until to-morrow, and the girls who live here thought they would like to be "in other people's shoes" for a change, you know, dear, and

that's all, only that the cook there—(*Pointing to WOPSIE*)—happens to be the daughter of your old friend, Mrs. Murray. (*MRS. MAPPE looks surprised, and smiles as she glances at WOPSIE, who is trying to hide herself behind the others*) Now, dearest of mothers, be a real sport, and don't tell Miss Wright, or else there'll be ructions, sure as pop.

MRS. MAPPE. Moira, what language you use! Well, I suppose I must give in. Come here, you wicked girls. (*They come forward, and she smiles at the comical picture they present*)

MOIRA. Didn't I tell you? I knew mother wouldn't peach! Let's give her a round. (*All join hands and form a circle round MRS. MAPPE, who stands in the middle, vainly protesting, as they sing, led by MOIRA*) "For she's a jolly good fellow, for she's a jolly good fellow, for she's a jolly good fellow, that nobody can deny." (*While they are singing and going round, the door is slightly opened, and the heads of the maids are seen, peeping in astonishment at the unexpected and surprising scene, and so surprised are they that they push the door a little wider, until they can be seen by the audience, though apparently quite unnoticed by the merry girls, who are still going round and singing*)

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